Claims 6 and 16 have been cancelled. Claims 1-5, 7-15, and 17 have been amended. Amended independent Claims 1, 10, and 17 recite features formulated on the basis of cancelled Claim 6. No new matter has been added.

Applicants note that the aforementioned Office Action indicates that the Information Disclosure Statement filed February 17, 2000 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(3) and has not been considered. However, the subject Information Disclosure Statement cited only three co-pending applications, all of which are in English. Thus, 37 CFR 1.98(a)(3), which requires a concise statement of relevance of any document not in the English language, is inapplicable. Accordingly, consideration of the information contained Information Disclosure Statement filed February 17, 2000 is respectfully requested.

Applicants also note the Office's request for confirmation that an Information Disclosure Statement was filed in the present application on February 22, 2001. Applicants hereby confirm the same and attach hereto copies of the subject Information Disclosure Statement with a Form PTO-1449 and the stamped postcard evidencing the Office's receipt of these papers. The documents listed in the subject Information Disclosure Statement may be deemed relevant because they were cited in an Official Action dated November 10, 2000, in a Japanese counterpart application. A copy of the Official Action is also enclosed herewith. Accordingly, consideration of the information contained in the Information Disclosure Statement filed February 22, 2001 is respectfully requested.

Applicants further note that the aforementioned Office Action indicates that the Declaration is not executed. Attention is respectfully directed to Applicants'

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November 15, 1999, in which Applicants filed a Declaration executed by each of the

inventors. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that no correction is required.

Additionally, Applicants note the absence in the aforementioned Office

Action of a rejection of Claim 5. Accordingly, confirmation of the status of this claim is

respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4 and 11-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second

paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the

subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention, for the reasons set forth in

paragraphs 2-5 of the aforementioned Office Action. This rejection is respectfully

traversed. By the present Amendment, Applicants have amended, inter alia, Claims 2-4

and 11-13. Applicants submit that amended Claims 2-4 and 11-13 avoid the grounds of

rejection and therefore satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Pending Claims 1, 4, 7-10, 13-15, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C.

§102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,870,717 (Wiecha). Claims 2, 3, 11, and 12

stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious over Wichea in view of U.S. Patent

No. 5,500,513 (Langhans, et al.). Claims 2, 3, 4, 12, and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C.

§103 as being obvious over Wichea in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,970,475 (Barnes, et al.).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 recites, inter alia, purchase approving means for,

when information representing approval of purchase of a selected article is input, storing

the inputted information in a database and deleting from displayed items associated with

articles displayed by a display means, displayed items associated with the selected article.

Independent Claims 10 and 17 correspond generally to independent Claim 1 and recite similar features in method and computer-readable storage medium forms, respectively.

By the aforementioned features, an approver can determine the present status of approval-requested articles and quickly decide whether to approve or reject the purchase of same. Thus, approval or rejection of a purchase-requested article can be made more efficiently.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that none of Wiecha, Langhans, et al., or Barnes, et al., alone or in combination (assuming, arguendo, that the documents could be combined) disclose or suggest at least the above-discussed claimed feature as recited in independent Claims 1, 10, and 17.

The Office notes that Wiecha teaches "deleting of a line item once an order has been placed with a vendor. . . ." (Office Action, page 3). Wichea relates to a system for ordering items over a computer network using an electronic catalog and teaches a purchasing process performed directly between a requestor and a buyer master server. (See Wichea, Fig. 4). Wichea further teaches that a line item in a "product clip board" can be deleted after an order has been placed. (Col. 9, line 1; Col. 10, line 2). However, the Wichea line items are transmitted to approvers as purchase orders in response to an employee's selection of a "Submit" icon. (Col. 3, lines 29-38). Absent from Wichea is any teaching or suggestion of deleting line items in response to the input of information representing approval of the purchase of a selected article. Thus, Applicants submit that, for at least this reason, independent Claims 1, 10, and 17 are not anticipated by the asserted citation.

Regarding pending Claims 2-4 and 11-13, which have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103, Langhans, et al. relates to an automated purchase control system in which users can purchase goods/services by selecting items stored in a database via an Internet while Barnes, et al. relates to an electronic procurement system and method for trading partners that includes an automatic settlement process for credit card purchases. Applicants submit that Langhans, et al. and Barnes, et al. add nothing to Wiecha's teachings that would remedy the above-mentioned deficiencies.

Applicants also respectfully submit that there has been no showing of any motivation in the cited documents that would lead one having ordinary skill in the art to arrive at, inter alia, the aforementioned claim feature of amended independent Claims 1, 10, and 17. Further, the Office has taken the position on paragraph 10 of the aforementioned Office Action that features of the claims are "an obvious design choice." This position is respectfully traversed as being manifestly incorrect and having no basis in fact. Further, labelling something as a "design choice" does not circumvent the requirement of showing motivation or suggestion to modify the prior art. See In re Chu, 36 USPQ2d 1089, 1095 (Fed. Cir. 1995).
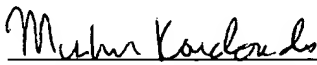
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as the base claim for which they depend and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Applicants believe the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action, and submits that the present

application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to

issue of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are

solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C.

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to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Amended) A purchase request approving apparatus capable of approving a purchase request of a desired article, comprising:

display means for displaying items of information, the items of information being (i) [which is] stored in a database in advance and (ii) [,] associated with articles for which approval of purchase is requested, in a list window capable of displaying the articles as a list; [and]

selecting means for selecting a desired article, in accordance with a user operation, from the articles displayed in the list window;

input means for inputting information representing approval or rejection of purchase of a selected article from the displayed articles; and

purchase approving means for, when information representing approval of purchase of the selected subject article is input, [capable of] storing the inputted[, in said database,] information in the database, and deleting [representing approval or rejection of purchase of an article selected] from the displayed items associated with the articles displayed by said display means, displayed items associated with the selected article.

2.   (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a purchase request for approval is requested from a requester belonging [capable of purchase request for the desired article belongs] to a group based on predetermined common information, and wherein said apparatus further comprises requester group setting means for [capable

of] setting a <u>plurality of</u> desired requester <u>groups</u> [group different from the group of

requesters] for which approval or rejection of purchase is to be determined by said

purchase approving means in accordance with the predetermined common information.

3.   (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the group

of requesters is a section group in a company, and the predetermined common information

is an identification code<u>, identification codes</u> representing each section of the company.

4.   (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 2, [wherein the

apparatus] further <u>comprising</u> [comprises] purchase request means <u>for</u> [capable of]

inputting <u>(i)</u> information associated with the desired article to be purchase-requested and

<u>(ii)</u> information for requesting approval of purchase of the <u>desired</u> article and storing the

input information in <u>the</u> [said] database, and <u>wherein</u> said purchase request means includes

display means <u>for</u> [capable of] displaying, before the input information is stored in <u>the</u>

[said] database, a list of specific information associated with a person who can <u>approve or</u>

<u>reject</u> [decide approval or rejection of] the purchase request from the requester<u>, the</u>

<u>requestor inputting (i)</u> [who has input] the input information and <u>(ii)</u> specific information

associated with a person who has set the desired requester group by said requester <u>groups</u>

[group] setting means, and selecting a desired person <u>from</u> [to] whom the requester

requests <u>approval</u> to [approve] purchase, using the displayed list.

5.   (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, when <u>the</u> information representing approval of purchase of the selected article is input and a purchase price of the article exceeds a predetermined amount, said purchase approving means notifies a user of the purchase price exceeding the predetermined amount.

7.   (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, [the apparatus] further <u>comprising</u> [comprises] purchase request means <u>for (i)</u> [capable of] inputting information associated with the desired article to be purchase-requested and <u>(ii)</u> information for requesting approval of purchase of the <u>desired</u> article[,] and storing the input information in <u>the</u> [said] database.

8.   (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said display means is a browser of an <u>Internet</u> [internet], <u>the browser being</u> [which is] executed by said purchase request approving apparatus connected to a communication network, and <u>wherein</u> said purchase approving means is constructed by a predetermined Web page displayed by <u>the</u> [said] browser.

9.   (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein <u>said</u> [the] purchase request approving apparatus is a client terminal connected to a communication network which can use an intranet environment.

10.   (Amended) A purchase request approving method of approving a

purchase request of a desired article using a computer, said method comprising:

a display step of displaying items of information, the items of information

being (i) [which is] stored in a database in advance and (ii) [,] associated with articles for

which approval of purchase is requested, in a list window capable of displaying the articles

as a list; [and]

a selecting step of selecting a desired article in accordance with a user

operation, from the articles displayed in the list window;

an input step of inputting information representing approval or rejection of

purchase of a selected article from the displayed articles; and

a purchase approving step of, when information representing approval of .

purchase of the selected article is input, storing the inputted [, in said database,]

information in the database, and deleting, [representing approval or rejection of purchase

of an article selected] from the displayed items associated with the articles displayed in

said display step, displayed items associated with the selected article.

11.   (Amended) The method according to claim 10, wherein a purchase

request for approval is requested from a requester belonging [capable of purchase request

for the desired article belongs] to a group based on predetermined common information,

and wherein said method further comprises a requester group setting step of setting a

plurality of desired requester groups [group different from the group of requesters] for

which approval or rejection of purchase is to be determined in said purchase approving

step in accordance with the predetermined common information.

12.   (Amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein the group

of requesters is a section group in a company, and the predetermined common information

is an identification code, identification codes representing each section of the company.

13.   (Amended) The method according to claim 11, [the method] further

comprising [comprises] a purchase request step of inputting (i) information associated with

the desired article to be purchase-requested and (ii) information for requesting approval of

purchase of the desired article, and storing the input information in the [said] database, and

wherein said purchase request step includes a display step of displaying, before the input

information is stored in the [said] database, a list of specific information associated with a

person who can approve or reject [decide approval or rejection of] the purchase request

from the requester, the requester inputting (i) [who has input] the input information and (ii)

specific information associated with a person who has set the desired requester group in

said requester groups [group] setting step, and selecting [allowing to select] a desired

person from [to] which the requester requests approval to [approve] purchase, using the

displayed list.

14.   (Amended) The method according to claim 10, wherein, in said

display step, a browser of an Internet [internet] is executed on a client terminal connected

to a communication network to display the items of information associated with the

articles, and wherein in said purchase approving step, information representing approval or

rejection of purchase is input to a window on a predetermined Web page displayed by the

[said] browser.

15.   (Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein the [said]

client terminal is connected to a communication network which can use an intranet

environment.

17.   (Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a program

for executing a purchase request approving method of approving a purchase request of a

desired article using a computer, said method comprising:

a display step of displaying items of information, the items of information

being (i) stored in a database in advance and (ii) associated with articles for which

approval of purchase is requested, in a list window capable of displaying the articles as a

list;

a selecting step of selecting a desired article in accordance with a user

operation, from the articles displayed in the list window;

an input step of inputting information representing approval or rejection of

purchase of a selected article from the displayed articles; and

a purchase approving step of, when information representing approval of

purchase of the selected article is input, storing the inputted information in the database,

<u>and deleting, from the displayed items associated with the articles displayed in said display</u>

<u>step, displayed items associated with the selected article</u>

[a program code capable of realizing the purchase request approving

method of claim 10 by a computer].

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